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" 'Tis all a libel, Paxton, Sir, will say." POPE.

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SUMMARY OF POLITICS.

DUKE OF YORK.—Much as I wish to communicate to the public some information, some *really* authentic information, which I possess, respecting the disposition of the people of Spain, their behaviour towards our army, the manner in which the retreat was conducted, the superior bodily strength and the superior bravery of our troops; anxious as I am to communicate this information to the public, I must defer it till my next, the parliamentary discussion relative to our illustrious Commander in Chief imperiously demanding a preference to every thing else.—On last Friday, the 27th ult. Mr. WARDLE, a member of the House of Commons, who came into the honourable house for the first time, I believe, in consequence of the dissolution in 1807, when his majesty was last "most graciously pleased to appear to the sense of his people," and for which gracious act the public will do me the justice to say, that I, at the time, expressed my profound gratitude, though I could not then possibly foresee a thousandth part of the good which has resulted from the dissolution. Mr. WARDLE, having before given due notice of his intention, did, on the day above-mentioned, after a speech of considerable length, make a motion "*for the appointment of a Committee to inquire into the conduct of the Commander in Chief, with regard to Promotions and Exchanges in the Army, &c. &c.*" This is truly *high matter*; and, as it is also matter of great "*delicacy*," as will be seen in the sequel, it will demand, from reader as well as writer, more than an ordinary degree of attention, to say nothing about the reverence, which, upon such an occasion, will naturally take and keep possession of our minds. The honourable persons, who spoke on the side of the Duke, and who, from what appears in the report, seem to have known his wish upon the subject, declared, ~~that~~ that wish was decidedly for *publicity*; that every part of the inquiry, from the beginning to the end, *should be made as public as possible*. In this respect, the public do, I am cer-

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tain, perfectly coincide in wishes with the royal chief; and, therefore, though, in general, it is not desirable that reports of debates should be inserted in this work, I shall insert here the *whole* of this most interesting debate, or, rather conversation, of the honourable House. Upon comparing the reports in the different newspapers, I find the best, that is to say, the *fullest*, to be in the Morning Chronicle, as is, indeed, usually the case. I find very little difference as to the *substance*, the accuracy with which the debates are, in general, taken and published, being really wonderful, and a circumstance eminently creditable to the talents of the gentlemen, by whom those debates are given to the public. But, upon this important occasion, I will, as I proceed with the insertion of the debate from the Morning Chronicle, subjoin, in notes, parts of the report as given in the Courier, wherever it appears that there has been any material omission in the report of the Morning Chronicle; and thus we shall have the best possible chance of letting nothing of consequence escape us.—Mr. WARDLE's speech, I find divided into distinct paragraphs. These I shall distinguish by numerical figures, which will facilitate the work of reference, a work which, in all human probability, we shall frequently have to perform, it being quite evident to me, that this is a matter, which is not only, at present, extremely interesting in itself, to the country in general, to all the payers of taxes, as well as to every man in the army; but, also a matter, the inquiries into which must, at a day more or less remote, produce important national consequences.—It may be thought, perhaps, by some, that it would be better for me to wait; to reserve my observations upon this debate, until it be seen whether Mr. WARDLE be able to substantiate his charges; especially as that may, perhaps, be known before this sheet can possibly reach the press. I am of a different opinion; because, whatever the result may be, there is much in the report, which appears to me loudly to call for that observation, with

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which it is my intention to close this article ; and because, from certain expressions therein contained, I think it may be reasonably supposed, that, if the observation is to go forth through the press, there is no time to be lost.—Having said this by way of preface, I shall proceed to insert the debate, just as I find it in the above-named news-papers, without the omission of a “*hear,*” or a “*laugh.*”

Mr. WARDLE rose, pursuant to his notice, and spoke to the following effect :

—I.—Fully aware, Sir, of the great importance of the subject I am about to submit to the consideration of the House, I most sincerely lament that my abilities are unequal to do it complete justice.—But yet I trust that an ardent zeal for the welfare of my country, supported by facts strong and incontrovertible, will enable me to surmount every difficulty, and eventually to rescue the state from the baneful influence of a power which has long been exercised for the worst of purposes, and which, in fact, tends to endanger our ultimate security. To stand forward the public accuser of a man so high in rank and so strong in influence as the Commander in Chief, may very naturally be deemed no less a bold than an arduous undertaking. But, however bold, however arduous it may be, being determined that no consideration of that nature shall ever induce any hesitation or wavering in the performance of my duty either upon this or upon any other occasion, my mind is fully made up for perseverance. In the resolution I have formed, it is but reasonable for me to calculate upon the concurrence and co-operation of this House and the country. For, at a crisis of peculiar peril, when the great, if not the only means of our safety may depend upon the judicious organization and able direction of our military force, every man in the community must feel a lively interest in the object which my motion has in view. I trust, therefore, his r. h. the duke of York will this night find, that however exalted his rank, however powerful his influence, the voice of the people, through their representatives, will prevail over corruption, and justice will be done to the calls of a long-suffering and meritorious body, to the best, to the vital interests of the people.—In the course which I am pursuing, I feel conscious of no motive but that of a desire to serve my country, and I am confident that none other can be fairly ascribed to me. The conviction of my mind is, and for

some time has been, that unless the system of corruption that has so long prevailed in the military department be done away, this country may fall an easy prey to the enemy. Consistently, therefore, with any rational feeling of solicitude for my country, which involves my own connections and my family, it is impossible that I should sit silent, and allow the practices which have come to my knowledge, to be any longer concealed, from those who are so much interested in their character and tendency. It is upon these grounds, Sir, that I am urged to offer myself to your attention.—II.—The first point in the case which I have to state, relates to the Half-pay Fund, which is an establishment under the direction of the Commander in Chief. This fund arises out of the sale of commissions vacant by death ; by the promotion of officers not allowed to sell ; or by dismissions from the service. The power of the Commander in Chief over this fund was constituted, and intended, for the reward of merit, either by the appointment of meritorious officers to the commissions which so became vacant, or by selling them and applying the produce of such sales to the redemption of half-pay commissions, or to the Compassionate Fund. Here the power of the Commander in Chief over such produce ceases. If the commissions I have described are otherwise disposed of, the authority vested in the Commander in Chief is abused, and the objects of the Half-pay Fund are abandoned. Now, if I can shew that those commissions are appropriated to very different purposes, it will of course appear that such abuse and abandonment does take place—that merit is not rewarded—that the Half-pay List is not reduced—that the Compassionate Fund is not assisted. For the purpose of shewing this, it is absolutely necessary to call the attention of the House to another establishment of the Commander in Chief’s, which is quite of a different complexion to that I have just mentioned. This establishment, which consisted of a splendid house in Gloucester-place, a variety of carriages, and a long retinue of servants, commenced in the year 1803, and at the head of it was placed a lady of the name of Clarke. As this lady forms a principal party in several of the facts which I have to cite, I am under the necessity, however reluctantly, to mention her name, as well as that of others, in order to make out a fair parliamentary basis for my motion, and to satisfy the House that I have not brought it forward

upon light grounds. In producing this satisfaction, I have no doubt of succeeding, and I assure the House, that I shall endeavour to avoid trespassing upon their time by the statement of more cases than appear to me necessary to the particular points which my motion embraces.—

III.—The first case to which I have to call your attention is that of capt. Tonyn, whom I understand to be an officer of merit, and in alluding to him upon this occasion, I beg it to be understood that I mean no reflection whatever upon his character. This officer, who held his captaincy in the 48th regt. of foot, was promoted to a majority in the 31st regt. according to the Gazette, on the 2d Aug. 1804. For such promotion, to which, no doubt, capt. Tonyn's professional merit entitled him to aspire, he was indebted to the influence of Mrs. Clarke; without which he might have long looked for promotion in vain. To Mrs. Clarke, capt. Tonyn was introduced by capt. Huxley Sandon, of the Royal Waggon Train; and the terms of agreement were, that Mrs. Clarke should be paid 500*l.* upon capt. Tonyn's majority being gazetted. In order to secure this payment it was arranged, that the amount should be lodged in the hands of a third person, as agent to the parties, and this agent was a Mr. J. Donovan, a surgeon, of Charles-street, St. James's-square. As I shall have frequent occasion to introduce this gentleman's name to-night, and may be obliged to resort to him hereafter, it seems right that I should present the House with some information about him. It appears that Mr. Donovan was appointed a lieutenant in the 4th Royal Garrison Battalion in the year 1802, and that he was afterwards promoted to the 11th Battalion. What the cause of this appointment and promotion was I have endeavoured to ascertain, but without success. I have however found, that the services of Mr. Donovan could not have been of a military nature. In fact since the day of his appointment in 1802, he has never joined his regiment. But there seems to be some reason for granting him a perpetual leave of absence, as he has been on constant duty in London. This gentleman was a member of the medical department of our army in the American war. If he deserved promotion, surely our medical staff is large enough to provide for him. What then could have taken him into the army? But to return to his pursuits in London.—The 500*l.* lodged with this gentleman was paid to Mrs. Clarke, by capt. Huxley Sandon, as soon as major

Tonyn was gazetted. Here it becomes necessary to observe to the House, that the regulated difference between a Company and a Majority is 1100*l.* which should have been appropriated as I before mentioned. But how does the affair stand? Mrs. Clarke gains 500*l.* and 1100*l.* are lost to the Half-pay Fund. This sum, however, of 500*l.* was paid by Mrs. Clarke to a Mr. Birket, a silversmith, in part payment for a service of plate for the establishment in Gloucester-place; *the balance for which plate was afterwards paid by h. r. h. the Commander in Chief.* The positions which I hold to be clearly deducible from this case are these—First, that Mrs. Clarke possessed the power of military promotion. Secondly, That she received pecuniary consideration for such promotion. And thirdly That the Commander in Chief was a partaker in the benefit arising from such pecuniary consideration. To establish the truth of this case, I have the following witnesses;—Major Tonyn, Mrs. Clarke, Mr. Donovan, capt. Huxley Sandon, and Mr. Birket's Executors.—IV.—The second case I have to adduce relates to the subject of exchanges. Upon the 25th of July 1805, an exchange was concluded between lieut.-col. Brooke, of the 56th regt. of Infantry, and lieut. col. Knight, of the 5th dragoon guards, through the influence of Mrs. Clarke. The agent for negotiating this transaction was a Mr. Thynne, a medical gentleman. The circumstances of the application to the duke of York were shortly these; Mrs. Clarke wanted some money to defray the expences of an excursion in the country; she therefore urged the Commander in Chief to expedite the exchange, as she was to receive 200*l.* for it. This urgent request was made upon a Thursday, and its influence was such that the exchange was actually gazetted upon the Saturday following. Mrs. Clarke in consequence received 200*l.* from the agent. This case then serves to shew—first, that, in addition to promotions, exchanges also were at the disposal of Mrs. Clarke; and secondly, that the purse of the Commander in Chief was saved by the supply which his mistress derived from such sources. The witnesses to this case are, lieut. col. Brooke, lieut. col. Knight, Mrs. Clarke, and Mr. Thynne.—V.—As a contrast to the preceding exchange, I shall take leave to state a case of peculiar hardship which occurred within the last year: two meritorious officers, major Macdonald and major Sinclair, both of the first reg. of infantry, and both in-

disposed, were anxious to make an exchange—the one desiring, for the recovery of his health, to remain in England; while the other, from a similar motive, desired to go to the West Indies. These gentlemen sought their object by every honourable means. The most urgent requests, and the most respectable recommendations were made in their favour, but in vain. No mistress was resorted to; no bribe of 200*l.* was offered; major Macdonald was forced to go to the West Indies, and fell immediately a victim to the climate; major Sinclair was forced to remain in England, and survived but a few months. Thus was the country deprived of two highly deserving officers.

—VI.—The fourth case I have to adduce refers to major John Shaw, of col. Champagne's Ceylon regiment. Major Shaw was appointed Deputy Barrack Master of the Cape of Good Hope upon the 3d of April, 1806, through the influence of Mrs. Clarke. It was known that this officer by no means enjoyed the favour of the duke of York; that in fact his royal highness entertained some prejudices against him. But these obstacles Mrs. Clarke easily contrived to overcome: for it was agreed to pay her 1,000*l.* for the major's appointment. The appointment was therefore made, and the major himself paid Mrs. Clarke 300*l.* Soon after, 200*l.* more were sent to Mrs. Clarke, by major Shaw's uncle, through Coutts's bank, and the payment was made by one of Mr. Coutts's clerks. The remaining 500*l.* however, was not paid; and when it was found not to be forthcoming, Mrs. Clarke was enraged, and threatened revenge. She actually complained to the Commander in Chief of major Shaw's *breach of contract*, and the consequence was that the major was soon after put on half-pay. I am in possession of several letters which passed upon this subject, from major Shaw and Mrs. Shaw, threatening both the Commander in Chief and Mrs. Clarke with public exposure, &c. if their complaints were not redressed, but in vain. In consequence of this business, I have been induced to examine the half-pay list, in order to see whether any similar reduction to that of major Shaw had taken place in the Barrack Department; but I have found no such thing. Such officers being, in fact, kept on full-pay, even on the home staff. This case of major Shaw was indeed the only instance I could find of such an officer being reduced to half-pay. The case of this officer then demonstrates, first, that Mrs. Clarke's

influence extended to appointments on the staff of the army, as well as to promotions and exchanges in the army itself; secondly, That the Commander in Chief punished an individual by reducing him from full to half pay, for non-performance of a nefarious contract with his mistress; thirdly, that the Commander in Chief was a direct party to all this shameful transaction. The witnesses to this case are, Mrs. Clarke, Mr. Shaw, uncle to major Shaw, Mr. Coutts's clerk, and Mrs. Shaw.——

VII.—I now come to the very novel case of colonel French and his levy. This officer was, through the influence of Mrs. Clarke, appointed by the Commander in Chief to conduct a levy in the years 1804-5. The colonel was introduced to Mrs. Clarke by capt. Huxley Sandon, and the condition upon which he obtained his appointment was, that Mrs. C. should have one guinea out of the bounty of each man raised, together with the sale or patronage of a certain number of the commissions. The agreement being concluded, it was communicated to, and approved of, by the Commander in Chief. Col. French was accordingly sent by Mrs. Clarke to the Horse Guards, and after many interviews, the levy was set on foot. As the levy proceeded, Mrs. Clarke received several sums of money from col. French, capt. Huxley Sandon, and a Mr. Corri. She also received 500*l.* from a Mr. Cockayne, who is a well known solicitor in Lyon's-inn, and a friend of capt. Huxley Sandon's.

—VIII.—But, to return for a moment to Mr. Donovan, the garrison-battalion lieutenant.—This gentleman, who was such a prominent agent in those transactions, was acquainted with an old officer, a Captain Tuck, whom he very strongly recommended to seek promotion; and to encourage him by a display of the facility with which it might be attained, he sent him a written scale of Mrs. Clarke's prices, for different commissions, which, in stating, I beg leave to contrast with the regulated prices of the Army:

<i>Mrs. Clarke's Prices.</i>	<i>Regulated Prices.</i>
A Majority £. 900	£. 2600
A Company 700	1500
A Lieutenantcy 400	550
An Ensigncy 200	400

From this scale it appears, that the funds I have before alluded to lost, in an enormous ratio to the gain of Mrs. Clarke, or any other individual acting upon the same system.——IX—Here I am to take leave of Mrs. Clarke. Here the scene closes upon her military negotiations;

and in what follows, the Commander in Chief alone is interested. It appears that his royal highness required a loan of 5000*l.* from col. French, and Mr. Grant, of Barnard's inn, promised to comply with the request in procuring the money, provided the Commander in Chief would use his influence and obtain payment to col. French of a balance due to him by government on account of the levy. This was promised, but the Commander in Chief failing to fulfil his part of the condition, the loan he required was not advanced, and 3000*l.* still remain due from government to col. French. The case of this levy shews, first, that Mrs. Clarke, in addition to promotions in the army, to exchanges, and appointments on the staff, *possessed the power of augmenting the military force of the country*; secondly, that in this case, as in all others, she was allowed to receive pecuniary consideration for the exercise of her influence; thirdly, that the Commander in Chief endeavoured to derive a pecuniary accommodation for himself independently of Mrs. Clarke's advantages. The witnesses in this case are colonel French, captain Huxley Sandon, Mrs. Clarke, Mr. Corri, Mr. Grant, capt. Tuck, and Mr. J. Donovan.—X.—The last case with which I shall at present trouble the House is that of capt. Maling. This gent. was appointed to an ensigncy in the 87th reg. on the 28th of Nov. 1805; to a lieutenancy in the same reg. on the 26th of Nov. 1806; and to a captaincy in the Royal African Corps, *under the command of the duke of York's own secretary, col. Gordon*, on the 15th of Sept. 1808. I have every reason to believe capt. Maling to be a very unexceptionable character, although I cannot help pronouncing the mode of his promotion as extremely exceptionable. But this promotion was effected through the influence of the favourite agent, Mr. Greenwood, *in whose office Mr. Maling was a clerk, remaining at his desk while advanced in the army by such an extraordinary course*—by a course which interfered with the interests, which superseded the rights of many meritorious officers who had long served in the army—who had fought and bled for their country. This Mr. Maling has also, I understand, had, while so promoted, some appointment of pay-master in Ireland. I would appeal to the candour of the House, to the common sense of any man or body of men, whether it be right, whether it be tolerable, that such an accumulation of favours should be conferred upon any individual without any claim of

professional merit, but merely through the operation of undue influence, while so many hundreds of truly deserving men are slighted and overlooked? I would ask, whether it be possible that our army can prosper—that its spirit can succeed, or its character be advanced, while such injustice is tolerated? But I will not dwell upon those points—it is quite unnecessary.

—XI.—The facts I have stated are such as must suggest such reflections to any man's mind. The House must feel the propriety, the necessity of grounding some proceeding upon such facts. The proceeding I propose will, I have no doubt, be acceded to. I am sure I have stated quite enough to induce the House to give me what I ask—I could state more if necessary. There is, indeed, one thing to which I cannot omit alluding. The House must be astonished indeed at the corruption of the times, when told, that there is at this moment a public office in the City for the Sale of Commissions, at the same reduced scale as that of Mrs. Clarke, and that the persons who manage this office stated in my presence that they were the agents of *the present favourite mistress, Mrs. Carey*. Indeed, these agents declared further, that they were also enabled to dispose of places both in *Church and State*, and that they did not hesitate to say, that they were employed by two of the first officers in the administration. But these are points to which I may, on a future day, feel myself more enabled to speak at large. The hon. member concluded with moving for the appointment of a Committee to inquire into the conduct of the Commander in Chief, with regard to Promotions and Exchanges in the Army, &c. &c.

Sir FRANCIS BURDETT seconded the motion.

The SECRETARY AT WAR said, that he did not rise to give any opposition to the motion. (*Hear, hear, from the Treasury Bench.*) If he did so, he would ill consult the wishes and worse consult the interests of the Commander in Chief*. The facts which the hon. gent. had brought forward were of the most serious nature,

* From a regard to the interests of the Commander in Chief, he felt *unfeigned satisfaction*, that, at length, an opportunity was afforded of instituting an effectual inquiry into the grounds of the various *calumnies and misrepresentations* which had, of late, been so industriously circulated against that illustrious personage.

and well deserved the attention of the House. He hoped the House would go into the inquiry, but listen to no charge unless it was clearly and distinctly stated. Charges on these or any grounds distinctly stated, his royal highness was ready to meet, and even *desirous* of going into the investigation. This, he believed, was all that was necessary for him to say in this stage of the business; but he requested the indulgence of the House while he made a few observations not foreign to the question. With regard to the private transactions stated by the hon. gent. he had never heard of them before, and therefore could not be prepared to give an answer. But he could contradict those that were stated to have occurred at the Horse Guards. The papers respecting the half-pay fund were before the House, and he had stated in his place, without being contradicted at the time, that his royal highness had given up a great part of his patronage for the benefit of that fund. It was needless to go into the facts, more particularly as a full inquiry would necessarily take place. He would only remark, that the thanks which the House had been conferring on the army reflected no small credit on the Commander in Chief. His gallant friend near him (sir Arthur Wellesley) might perhaps, state of what description the army was which the Commander in Chief had put into his hands. Could the army have achieved the great exploits, for which it had been distinguished, *if it had been ill-managed for a series of years*. It had been universally allowed, that to make courage available in the day of battle *discipline* was necessary; and it was well-known how much the Commander in Chief had attended to that object, which had rendered the army so formidable to the enemy. Another fact, to which it was important to allude, was the extreme order and regularity which had been introduced into the office of the Commander in Chief, which the inquiry would prove.

SIR ARTHUR WELLESLEY *rejoiced* that the honourable gent. had at length brought forward facts, to which a specific inquiry might be directed—and he *rejoiced* also, that the character of the Commander in Chief would not be the subject of that general sort of discussion, which sometimes took place in that House; but that every fact would be fully and fairly sifted. It had fallen to his lot to know how promotions were conducted in the office of the Commander in Chief, and he knew

that it was regularly recorded in that office who recommended the promotion, and the documents would be found there, so that all these transactions might be completely traced. With regard to the produce of the half-pay fund, the mode in which the money came into the office, and the mode in which it was issued, were recorded. Under these circumstances, he *rejoiced* that a committee was to be appointed, and he hoped they would make a special Report—so much with regard to the alledged facts; but he must observe, with respect to the removal of the Barrack Master of the Cape of Good Hope, that such removals were circumstances of common occurrence. The instance in question related to the establishment at Ceylon; and in foreign establishments, though the facts stated by the hon. gent. should be true, it constituted no ground of charge, for it was in the ordinary course of the service. With respect to the exchange between an officer going to the West Indies and one remaining here, the Commander in Chief would be in a most extraordinary situation if it was to be made a ground of accusation, that he had not consented to an arrangement tending to the convenience, perhaps to the benefit of individuals. As to one of these gentlemen dying here, and the other in the West Indies, if these general charges were to be listened to, it would be impossible for a person in his royal highness's illustrious station to conduct the business. The circumstances stated by the hon. gent. went to shew, that his royal highness, with a view to put a little money in his own pocket, had encroached upon the half-pay fund. But the House would collect, *that this fund was established by his royal highness*, and the money furnished from the produce of commissions, which he might have given away *without any sale at all*. But the Commander in Chief gave up his own patronage, and saved to the public an immense sum—and yet he was charged with an embezzlement of this sort! But he was *glad* that a full enquiry was to take place. There was still one topic on which he would be to blame, if he did not say a few words—he alluded to the state of the army under his command last summer. He must say, that never was there an army in a better state as far as depended on the Commander in Chief, and he must further say, that if the army had not performed the service for which it was destined, the blame would

not have rested with the Commander in Chief, but with him—(*hear! hear!*) *

Mr. YORKE observed, that he never listened to a charge more serious, and he had heard it with the greatest possible concern, both on account of the Commander in Chief, and the hon. gent. who had brought it forward, (*hear! hear!*) who took so *heavy a responsibility* upon himself. But he was *glad* that the House had come at last to some charges against h. r. h. the Commander in Chief in a tangible form.† Publications which he would treat as libels, (*hear! hear!*) had lately appeared against the Commander in Chief, and these had been circulated with a pertinacity hitherto unexampled. He was *glad*, therefore, that something was now brought forward in a tangible form, and he hoped the House would do its duty to itself, to the country, and to the ROYAL HOUSE OF BRUNSWICK—(*Loud cries of hear! hear!*); that blame might rest where it ought to be fixed, and that if there was no ground for these accusations, justice might be done to the Commander in Chief. And he sincerely hoped, that if the latter should turn out to be the fact—the hon. gent. would be enabled to acquit himself, by shewing at least, that there existed some probable reasons in support of the *heavy charge* which he had taken *upon himself*. For my own part, Mr. Yorke continued, I believe that there exists a CONSPIRACY of the most atrocious and diabolical kind against his royal highness (*loud cries of hear! hear!*)—founded on the JACOBINICAL spirit which appeared at the commencement of the French revolution; for though this *spirit* did not shew itself exactly in the same form as at first, when once raised it was not easily quelled, and it never could promote its views with better hopes of success than by TALKING down illustrious persons—(*hear! hear!*). It was the object to write down his royal highness—

* If that army had not performed those services, which it had pleased that House to honour with its thanks, it would not have been their or the Commander in Chief's fault, but his own; and whatever *enthusiasm* they had felt, was the result of the *example* and *discipline*, afforded by the illustrious person at the head of the army.

† At length they could reach in a tangible shape some of those libels which had for some time past been more assiduously and pertinaciously circulated than at any former period in this country so prolific in libels.

it was no less so to write down all the establishments of the country. By means of the press, the liberty of which was so valuable, and the licentiousness of which was so pernicious, it appeared to be the design of the CONSPIRATORS to write down the military system through the Commander in Chief—the army through its generals, and other establishments through the persons most conspicuous in each—

[*The remainder of the Debate shall be given in my next.*]

Now, as I said before, we need not wait for this discussion, in order to be able to form a judgment upon certain very important points, introduced into this debate; because those points are quite distinct from the main subject of the debate.

Upon the statement of Mr. WARDLE no observation need be made. It consists of facts; not of declamation or loose assertion; but of specific facts, the truth or falshood of which may be, and are to be, ascertained. I should, however, do great violence to my feelings, were I to suppress an expression of my admiration of the manly as well as the able manner, in which that statement was made. The speech was, at once, concise, plain, and impressive; the allegations were unequivocal, the motives undisguised, and the principles such as do honour to the heart of the speaker; such principles as a great majority of us entertain, but such as very few of us indeed, have the courage to avow. There was no hypocrisy in the speech; no affected solicitude that the charges might prove false. The persuasion in the mind of the speaker evidently was, that he was stating truths; and, accordingly, he appeared to be afraid of nobody. The Morning-Post newspaper calls it "a curious speech." If by "curious," he, the editor, means *rare*, I must confess that it was "curious" in the highest degree.

As to the reported and published speeches of the other speakers, the first thing that struck me was, that they should have contained any thing at all, except what might relate to the *mode of inquiry*. The charges were so clearly stated, that there seemed to be nothing to do but, at once, to fix upon the mode of inquiring into them. However, it appeared to be an occasion for many persons to express their opinions relating to the person accused, and, therefore, we will notice what they said, it being desirable that nothing

should escape publicity that belongs to this important subject.

A direct denial of the facts does not appear to have been made by any one; but, the Secretary at War (general sir James Pulteney, who marched against *Ferrol*, as the reader will remember) said, that, as a proof that the army had not been badly managed, as a proof that the Duke of York had not abused his powers, the excellent *discipline* of our army might be cited, and for the proof of the goodness of that discipline, he referred to sir Arthur Wellesley. Sir Arthur, who appears to have been seated near sir James, bore testimony to the excellence of this discipline; imputed, in part, to the Duke, that valour the consequence of which had recently been a subject of the thanks of the House; and concluded by saying, that, whatever *enthusiasm* the army had felt was the result of the *example* and discipline afforded by the illustrious person at the head of the army. Mr. Yorke said, that, at the time when the Duke took the army in hand, it was in such a state as *scarcely to deserve the name of an army*.—Now, whatever others may think of the matter, I do not believe, that any, even the smallest portion, of the strength or the bravery of my countrymen is to be ascribed to the Duke of York, to any branch of the government, or to any other cause than that which proceeds from nature. I look upon steady courage; upon a temper to resist or attack without trepidation; to bear up when they come to the pinch; I look upon these as qualities *natural* to the people of this kingdom; nor will I, upon any account, give my assent, express or tacit, to any assertion leading to a contrary conclusion. But, the ascribing of the *enthusiasm* of the English soldiers at Vimiera to *discipline* is what I cannot understand. *Discipline* consists of *restraints*, at least; generally it implies checks, pains and penalties. Discipline may, and does, produce prompt obedience, submission, and, of course, order and regularity; but, that it should fill the soul with *enthusiasm* is, to say the least of it, something wonderful. "*Example*," indeed, may inspire an army with enthusiasm; and as to the probable effect of the *Duke of York's example*; the *example* afforded by his battles; as to this, I am sure, it is quite unnecessary for me to say one word to any living creature in this kingdom.—After all, however, what has this to do with the subject: the great subject now before the House and the public? To admit, that the men

of the 50th regiment, when they were making that gallant charge at Vimiera, before which the French instantly ran like a flock of sheep; suppose we were to admit, that the brave private dragoon, who took general Lefebvre; suppose we were to admit, that our regiments before Corunna, who, when engaged against triple their force, in point of numbers, and who, at the end of a march that had left even the officers barefooted, stood like a wall before the enemy, and when they saw fresh numbers pouring down, gave three huzzas, rushed forward upon the gathering host, drove them up the hill, and by that act of almost unexampled bravery secured the safety of the embarkation: suppose we were to admit, that all these men were inspired solely by the "*example*" of the Duke of York. Nay, suppose we were to admit, to its full extent, the idea of Mr. Yorke; suppose we were to admit, that it was the Duke who alone had rendered the English soldiery worthy the name of an army; that he, and he alone, had poured courage into the breasts of Britons, and had given them strength of bone and of sinew. Suppose we were to admit all this, and, I think, it is hard if a broader admission could be demanded, or wished for, even by the most zealous Anti-jacobin in the country; suppose we were to admit all this, what would the admission make; of what weight would it be; how would it at all alter the case, when set against facts such as those stated by Mr. Wardle? The *skill* and the *courage* of the Duke of York are things which appear to me to have nothing at all to do with his mode of distributing promotion. Nothing at all to do with those bargains and sales mentioned by Mr. Wardle. Mr. Wardle plainly stated, that Mrs. Clarke, with the connivance of the Duke of York, had received so much a head upon a new levy. Is this to be answered by citing the *military renown* of the Duke of York? Mr. Wardle states, that a man was going through a long course of military promotion and pay, while he was actually a clerk in the agent, Greenwood's, office. Is this to be answered by telling us, that our army fought well at Vimiera? No, no. Such facts are to be efficiently met by nothing short of *flat denial*; and, unless they can be so met, at once, it were much better to wait the want of proof on the part of those, from whom the accusation has proceeded.

There was another *argument*, made use of by Mr. Adam, which does not seem to

me to be much more conclusive as to the main point. It was this: that he had, for 20 years past, had an intimate knowledge of the pecuniary concerns of the Duke of York; that he had been acquainted with all his embarrassments (of the *cause* of which, however, he did not speak); that, in all his transactions with the Duke, he had found him extremely unreserved, fair, and correct; that he never heard of any concerns with Mrs. Clarke and the like; that he thought he must have heard something of them, if they had had any existence; and that, *therefore*, the accusation must be false. The report of Mr. Adam's speech must, certainly, be incorrect; for, it is incredible, that a gentleman, who is so well able to reason, and who has so long been accustomed to weigh arguments with such nicety, should have drawn, either expressly or by inference, so illogical a conclusion; a conclusion destroyed, at once, if we perceive, that it proceeds solely upon premises, which are *matter of opinion*. All that Mr. Adam asserts positively, I, for my part, who have good reason to know and be grateful for his wisdom and integrity, implicitly believe; but, there may, without any impeachment of any of the excellent qualities of his head or heart, be great doubts with respect to the fact, whether, if an illicit commerce in commissions existed, he would necessarily hear of it; nay, it may be thought, that he would be amongst the *last* men in the world who would be made acquainted therewith.

The next point that presents itself is that of the "*heavy responsibility*," to which it was said, that Mr. Wardle had *subjected* himself. Almost all the honourable members, who spoke in praise of the Duke of York, used some phrase or other expressive of their *pleasure* at what Mr. Wardle had done. The Secretary at War declared his great *satisfaction* at it; Sir Arthur Wellesley *rejoiced* three times and was *glad* once; Mr. Yorke was *glad* twice and once *happy*; and Mr. Canning *congratulated* the Duke of York upon the matter being brought forward. This cannot fail to give the country a high opinion of the independence and love of impartial justice in these gentlemen. Yet, somehow or other, they did, most of them, seem to be deeply impressed with a *risk*, of some sort, that Mr. Wardle ran, from having performed this pleasure-giving task. Mr. Yorke called it a "*heavy responsibility*;" and Mr. Canning said, that "*infamy* must attach, either upon the accused or the *accuser*." If Mr. Canning meant, by the *accuser*, the in-

former, I agree with him; but, not so, if he meant Mr. Wardle; for, if that were to be admitted, what would become of the characters of Attornies and Solicitors, high as well as low, who prefer accusations against men, who are acquitted? Will Mr. Canning say, that "*infamy*" attached to sir John Scott (now lord Eldon), because Mr. Horne Tooke was, upon a charge of treason preferred by sir John, *proved to be innocent of the charge*, being acquitted by a jury, which acquittal corresponded with the charge of a most learned and upright judge? No. Mr. Canning will not say this. It must, however, not only be said, but *proved*, before it will be admitted, that "*infamy*" will attach to Mr. Wardle, though his charges against the Duke should, like those against Mr. Horne Tooke, finally appear, from the best possible evidence, to be false; except, indeed, it should be made appear, that the charges *originated* with Mr. Wardle; that he *hatched* the facts; that he has *hired and bribed spies and informers*; that, in short, he has formed a conspiracy to injure, by base means, the reputation of the accused person. Mr. Yorke qualified his phrase of "*heavy responsibility*" by afterwards saying, that he hoped Mr. Wardle had, at least, "*probable grounds*" for what he had done. This was right; and, giving to Mr. Canning's words the application above-pointed out, I agree with them; but, if "*infamy*" were to attach to a member, who failed to prove a case put into his hands, the House of Commons would be in a pretty situation. "*The freedom of debate*" would soon be reduced to a level with another sort of freedom, of which we shall speak by-and-by. Suppose a case of a different nature. Suppose a good, honest, well-meaning member of parliament to be informed, that there is, even at this late day, a plot against the life of the king, and for the purpose of overturning "*the monarchy*," upsetting "*regular government*," overthrowing "*social order*," and blowing up "*our holy religion*," and that the conspirators (names this and that) with all their books and papers, all their bloody and anti-christian implements, were at that moment hard at work in some garret in St. Giles's. Suppose this; suppose the good man to inform the House of it; suppose the king's messengers, the police magistrates, the horse guards, dispatched to the scene of brooding destruction, with an order to bring to the bar every creature there found; and, suppose the conspira-

tors to consist of a poor old woman and her cat. Would it be fair, would it be just, to say that *infamy* attached to the good hoaxed gentleman? No. He might be reasonably enough laughed at for his credulity; but, even the parties accused could not justly charge him with *infamy*. In this case of Mr. Wardle, as in all other cases of a similar nature, the blame, if any, must be in proportion to the want of grounds, not for the *charges themselves*, but for *his belief of them*; and, therefore, however the *proof* may turn out, if it appear, that Mr. Wardle did receive information of the facts, which he has stated; that the informants are persons whose oath would be taken in a court of justice, and be sufficient for the hanging of any one of their neighbours in common life; and especially if it should be proved, that, amongst these informants, there be one, or more, of character so respectable as to have lived in habits of intimacy with the person accused; if *this* should be made appear, the public will, I am of opinion, agree with me, that, so far from any blame attaching to Mr. Wardle, he would have been guilty of a scandalous neglect of his duty, if he had refused, or delayed, to do what he has done.

I now come to a part of the debate, to which I must beg leave earnestly to crave the reader's most serious attention; after which allusion he will readily conclude that I mean that part which relates to an existing CONSPIRACY in this country. Not an imaginary thing like the one above supposed; but a real conspiracy, for the purpose, as Mr. Yorke described it, of *talking and writing down the Duke of York*, and, through him, and the Generals of the army, *the army itself*; of talking and writing down *all the establishments of the country*; which description, with somewhat of limitation, appears to have been repeated by Mr. Canning and Lord Castlereagh.—Coming from such high and grave authority the statement demands our attention. We have, indeed, seen publications in some of the news-papers, stating something about an existing design, in certain persons, to overthrow "social order;" to undermine, at the instigation of the devil, our happy constitution in church and state; and, we have lately seen, a stupid author, in a dirty pamphlet about Jacobinism, addressed to the Earl of Lonsdale, hammering his brains, to shew, that the Edinburgh Reviewers have formed a plan, a regular system, for effecting this wicked purpose, by the means of their Review, which, to

the regret of all those who admire excellent and most powerful writing, is published only four times a year, and which work, in only one single article upon the subject of the Methodistical doctrines, has done more good to the country, than all the writings of all the trading Anti-Jacobins, than all the hundreds and thousands of volumes, all the waggon-loads and ship-loads of printed trash, that have issued upon, and disgusted the world, from this, at once, vapid and polluted source. From this abundant, this overflowing tide, this Nile of venality, corruption, filth, falshood, venom, and all uncharitableness, we have heard it asserted, that a Jacobinical conspiracy is in existence, and accordingly, to the assertion we have turned a deaf ear. But, now, when it is made in parliament; when it comes from such high authority, we must not only give it belief, but must accompany that belief with our regret, that the important, the awful, truth, was not sooner officially proclaimed, and that it should have been kept back until the moment, when *distinct charges* of corruption and profligacy, of the very worst sort, were, however unjust they may finally appear, made, *by a member of parliament*, against the person, at whose reputation the "CONSPIRATORS" are said to be levelling their most deadly shafts.—That the conspiracy does exist, and has, for some months (I think, that's it) existed, there can, however, be *now* no doubt; that it has an existence, not like the *real* presence in the wafer; not a legerdmain or metaphorical existence; nothing of priestcraft or law-fiction about it; but, that there is, in England (oh! poor England), amongst the dwellings of John Bull, at this very time, without any mental reservation, a Jacobinical Conspiracy; a conspiracy of corporeal beings, for the purpose, as lord Castlereagh expressed it, "of overthrowing the monarchical branch of the Constitution."—Mr. Yorke must understand these things better than we, in the country, do; but, to us, a *talking* conspiracy is something new, and calls to my mind Dennis's admirable criticism upon the tragedy of Cato. "What, the Devil!" says he, "are your conspirators come here again, to hold, aloud, treasonable dialogues in Cato's own hall?" The man, who, in one of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays, is apprehended as a conspirator, when his real sin is mere gluttony, is accused upon the ground of his half-uttered sentences, while in eager search for a

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cod's head instead of that of his sovereign. And, indeed, the great characteristic of conspirators heretofore has been that of cautiousness, and silence; but, as we are now assured, from such high authority, that there is actually a *talking* conspiracy on foot, it becomes us all to put a *bridle* in our mouths, that "we offend not with our tongue."—As to the *writing* part of the conspiracy, I have, I must confess, observed things that appeared to me to lean this way; and upon reading the debate, above inserted, I looked over the *Courier* news-paper, from the *eleventh* to the *twenty-sixth* of this month, comprizing a space of fifteen days, or half a month. The following are amongst the Jacobinical productions that I found, and I lay them before a public, that, I am sure, will participate in the abhorrence which I entertain of the mean and villainous miscreants, from whose pens they proceeded.

"ONE HUNDRED POUNDS in a Banker's hands ready to be advanced to any Lady or Gentleman who will procure the Advertiser a permanent situation in the Stamp-Office or Customs adequate. The greatest SECRECY may be relied upon. A line addressed, post-paid, to J. Smith, the Rose and Crown, Wimbledon, will meet due attention."

"FROM FIVE HUNDRED TO ONE THOUSAND POUNDS, will be presented to any Gentleman or Lady, who can obtain or procure for the Advertiser, an adequate and permanent Situation or Place under Government, in Town, or a few Miles from it.—For Integrity and Trust, Testimonials of Character and Respectability can be had, &c. &c. Letters addressed to J. P. L. Peele's Coffee-house, will meet due and secret attention."

"ONE THOUSAND POUNDS will be given by a Gentleman to any Person having interest to procure him a respectable Situation under Government.—Direct to A. B. at Mr. West's, Bookseller, No. 81, Great Portland-street, Mary-le-bone."

"COUNTRY PATRONAGE. Any Gentleman enabled by Resignation or otherwise, to present the Advertiser with a permanent Situation, in the Country only, may be treated with, by addressing a Letter, post-paid, to L. P. C. Mr. Lauman, Taylor, St. James's-street, London."

Now, the manifest object of the persons making these publications, must be to cause it to be believed, that the places under go-

vernment are to be *bought and sold*, pretty much in the same way as beef or mutton. There are about twelve daily papers in London, and if we reckon on the above standard, at *eight*, a month, for each paper, it will make 1,152 of these publications in a year; publications, each of which amounts to an assertion, that, at least, in the opinion of the writer, the offices under the government, the salaries of which ought to go to pay for *services* to the public, are sold, and the price put into the pockets of such women or men as can procure the bestowing of the places.—

These, indeed, are writings that tend to the destruction of "the monarchical branch of the Constitution;" and, how it happens that *they* have never been noticed, I must leave the reader to find out.—Oh! the sad rogues! They would persuade us, that they can *buy*, actually deal for, cheapen, and buy, for a sum of money, to go into the pocket of some woman, those very salaries which we pay for the doing of the nation's business! If this is not striking at "social order" and "regular government," I should be glad to know what is.

—Mr. PERCEVAL, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, said, as will be seen by referring to the debate, that "it was not for him to tell the house, that, in this great capital, it *might happen* that foolish persons were frequently deceived by advertisements in the public papers, announcing the disposal of official patronage; and, *perhaps*, it has, *occasionally*, TURNED OUT, that the very persons, who were originally DECEIVED by these advertisements to make applications, *did ultimately obtain the very appointments for which they had endeavoured to negotiate.*"

—Eh? How's that? Yes! I see it now; I see it now, as clear as daylight. Aye, aye; that is plain enough. It is just as Mr. Perceval said. Foolish people, seeing places advertised for sale, were deceived by them; but, it occasionally turned out, that these same foolish and deceived people did, in the end, get those very places, which the advertisements invited them to purchase.—This explanation cannot, I should hope, fail to produce a very salutary effect.

The last part of the debate, upon which I think it necessary, at present, to make any remark, is that which related to *libels* and the *liberty of the press*. I have so recently discussed this subject, that it is quite irksome to return to it; yet, what was said in the debate, especially by Mr. Yorke and Mr. Canning, strongly urges me to say

something, though it be mere repetition. —Both these gentlemen said, that there had been a series of libels published against the duke of York; which may be very true; and, if they mean *falsehood* as an essential ingredient to constitute a libel, no man in all the world can wish the libellers to be punished more sincerely than I do; though I cannot help repeating what I have a thousand times said, that I do not think, that an aspersion upon the character of any man, was ever wiped off by an appeal to the law. No man ever practised what he preached more strictly than I do this doctrine. I have been, for about thirteen years, and am at this very day (see the Morning Post of Monday last,) the object of almost continual printed calumny. Not calumny conveyed in *in-uendoes*, but in downright charges of the most infamous nature. I do not think, that there is a crime known to man, that I have not, either in America, or at home, been charged with. Knowing them to be false, those charges never gave me a moment's uneasiness. Once in a while, I have given a contradiction to lies, and have exposed misrepresentations. Trusting to the force of truth, I have, for the most part, left falsehood and malice to work their way; and, I do not believe, that in the opinion of one single sensible man that ever even heard of me, I have suffered, in the smallest degree, by the publications that have been made against me; and, as for fools, it is no matter what are their opinions.—But, there were two positions, one from Mr. Yorke and the other from Mr. Canning, to which I am disposed to pay particular attention.—The first of these gentlemen said, that libels had, of late, been more abundant, *against persons in authority*, than at *any former period*, in this country, so fertile in libels; and the latter said, that, in publications, *rank* ought to be regarded like *sex*, and that, to assail persons of exalted rank, was an act of baseness and cowardice, equal to that of assaulting a defenceless woman.—Mr. Canning may have been misrepresented by the reporters; they may not have caught his meaning; but, if they did, that meaning is decidedly hostile to my sentiments upon the subject; nay, it is the very reverse of those sentiments. There was much said about the “*blessings* of a “*free press*,” but, if it be to be regarded as an act of baseness to assail men of rank, I should be glad to know in what those “*blessings*” consist? The “*freedom of the press*” means, the freedom of ex-

amining and exposing the actions of *public* men; men who are entrusted with the nation's affairs; and these are necessarily men of high rank. If the “*freedom of the press*” has not this meaning, it has no meaning at all, and all the talk about it is nonsense; and, therefore, according to this new doctrine, to use the freedom of the press at all, is an act of baseness and cowardice. Of all bad, or despicable, qualities, that of *cowardice* is the last that I should have expected to hear imputed to an unsupported individual, who assails men in power. Cowardice might, indeed, well be imputed to those, who, supported by the powerful, should send their publications forth like a mail coach, under government protection. To those, who, thus backed, should assail individuals, pour out upon them all sorts of calumnies, having no dread of punishment, cowardice may well be imputed. Here the charge of cowardice is due; for, not only would the calumniator be pretty secure from the dangers to which the opponents of men in power are exposed; but, worst come to worst, he would be sure of a compensation for his pains and his losses.—I have never yet got any answer to this question: “*What is freedom of the press?*” I want an answer to this question from some one of those, who talk of the “*licentiousness* of “*the press*.” It does not consist in publishing books upon planting, farriery, or fox-hunting. There is not a despot upon earth, who attempts to prevent such publications. In short, it is farcical to talk about freedom of the press, unless by it we mean the *right*, the acknowledged *legal right*, of freely expressing our opinions, be they what they may, *respecting the character and conduct of men in power*; and of stating any thing, no matter what, if we can prove the *truth* of the statement.—In this sense the freedom of the press is a great “*blessing*.” In this sense it is “*a terror to evil doers, and a reward to those who do well*,” but, if the freedom of the press means, that we are not to assail men in power; that they are to be as sacred from the quill as women are from the sword; while, on the other hand, the press is to *praise* them as much as it pleases; then, the “*freedom of the press*” is the greatest curse that ever fell upon a nation. It is in the character and conduct of *men in power* that the public are interested. These are the *very matters*, upon which they want, and ought to receive information. The babble of the day is of no public utility. The particulars of who

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walks or rides out with the king ; of where and when the Duke of York salutes his royal parents ; of the breakfasts and dances at Frogmore ; of generals Cartwright and Fitzroy's going to chapel and hearing a sermon ; of the cabinet and other grand dinners : these may amuse some few gossiping people ; but of what *use* are they to the nation ? Of full as little use are dissertations containing merely general principles, without a direct application of them to men and things of the present day.

—But, we are sometimes told, that we may discuss the characters and measures of men in power, taking care not to *hurt their feelings* ; that is to say, taking care never to *blame* either the men or the measures ; for, if blamed, it follows of course, that their feelings *must be hurt*. We have been talked to a great deal about *decency* in these discussions ; and we are now told, that we, of this day, are *abusive* ; indeed, *censure*, or even *disapprobation*, however expressed, is now-a-days, always called abuse. We are charged, too, with being *foul-mouthed* ; *coarse* ; *personal* ; and are accused of *surpassing in libellousness the writers of all former times*. These assertions have been often made ; but now, at a moment when there are so many persons under government prosecution for libels ; now, when all the venal writers seem to have formed a conspiracy against the character, and, perhaps, the lives of those prosecuted persons, by exciting in the mind of those who are to be their jurors, a prejudice against them ; now it is absolutely necessary to inquire into the truth of such assertions.—The writers of former times ; times when not a thousandth part of the present corruptions prevailed ; the writers (from some of whose works I am forming a collection to be published hereafter) who, in those times of comparative purity, surpassed in boldness, the writers of the present day ; the bare names of those writers would fill a volume. I will, however, content myself with some extracts from POPE, who was one of the greatest scholars, the most acute reasoners, the most independent and virtuous men, and, without exception, the brightest genius that England ever produced. When he wrote, in the last reign, and in the year 1733, the laws and constitution of England were as well understood as they now are, and loyalty was not less a virtue than it now is. *Corruption* (under the administration of sir Robert Walpole) was only in its infancy. Now, then, let us hear how this accomplished scholar, this great ge-

nius, whose works are read with such admiration, and which make a part of the library of every man of sense who has the means of procuring books ; let us hear how this all-accomplished writer expressed himself upon the subject of the then prevailing vice and corruption.

Lo ; at the wheels of her triumphal car,
Old England's Genius, rough with many a scar,
Dragg'd in the dust ! his arms hang idly round,
His flag inverted trails along the ground !
Our youth, all liv'ry'd o'er with foreign gold,
Before her dance : behind her, crawl the old !
See thronging millions to the pagod run,
And offer country, parent, wife, or son !
Hear her black trumpet thro' the land proclaim,
THAT NOT TO BE CORRUPTED IS THE SHAME.
In soldier, churchman, patriot, man in pow'r,
'Tis av'rice all, ambition is no more !
See, all our nobles begging to be slaves !
See, all our fools aspiring to be knaves !
The wit of cheats, the courage of a whore,
Are what ten thousand envy and adore :
All, all look up, with reverential awe,
At crimes that 'scape, or triumph o'er the Law ;
While truth, worth, wisdom, daily they decry—
Nothing is sacred now but villainy.

Yet may this verse (if such a verse remain)
Shew there was one who held it in disdain.

This is only one instance. In many others he *named* the corrupt persons. But, POPE was called a "libeller ;" and, in his preface to that part of his inestimable works, from which the above extract is made, he observes, that "there is not in the world a greater error, than that which *fools* are so apt to fall into, and *knaves* with good reason to encourage, the mistaking a *satyr* for a *libeller*." He says, that the clamour raised on some of his former writings, induced him to bring before the public the writings of HORACE and DR. DONNE. With a similar view I now appeal to him, who exceeded them both in genius, and yielded to neither in any estimable quality. Having shown the public with what freedom those authors wrote, he next gives us his own sentiments upon what was, by the venal tribe of his day, called *libellous*, *gross*, *coarse*, *filthy*, *brutal*, *personal* and *seditions* ; and one cannot help being struck with the exact similarity in the clamours of that day and the clamours of this ; though, indeed, there is nothing wonderful in it, seeing that profligacy and corruption, being always the same in nature, must always have the same antipathies, as surely as vipers of the present day inherit the fears as well as the poison of their progenitors of a century ago.—Here, in the following extracts, we have all the old

grounds of clamour, together with the refutation and exposure. I beseech the public to abstract themselves from the poetry and the wit, and fix their attention wholly upon the *reasoning*. In it they will find an answer to *all* the cavilling and clamouring now in use by the conspirators against the real freedom of the press; and, I trust, they will join with me in sentiments of profound gratitude to the memory of the matchless author.

Friend. 'Tis all a libel, Paxton, Sir, will say.

Pope. Not yet, my friend! to-morrow, 'faith, it And for that very cause I print to-day. [may; How should I fret to mangle ev'ry line, In reverence to the sins of *Thirty-nine*!

Vice with such giant strides comes on amain, Invention strives to be before in vain;

Feign what I will, and paint it e'er so strong, Some rising genius sins up to my song.

Fr. Yet none but you *by name* the guilty lash; Ev'n Guthry saves half Newgate by a dash.

Spare then *the person*, and expose *the vice*.

P. How, Sir! not damn the sharper, but the dice?

Come on then, Satire! gen'ral, unconfin'd,

Spread thy broad wing, and souse on all the kind.

Ye statesmen, priests, of one religion all!

Ye tradesmen, vile, in army, court, or hall!

Ye rev'rend atheists. *Fr*. Scandal! *name them*, Who?

Po. Why that's the thing you bid me not to do.

Who starved a sister, who forswore a debt,

I never nam'd; the town's enquiring yet.

The pois'ning dame — *Fr*. You mean —

Po. I don't. *Fr*. You do.

Po. See, now I keep the secret, and not you!

The bribing statesman — *Fr*. Hold, *too high* you go. [too low.

Po. The brib'd elector — *Fr*. There you stoop

Po. I fain would please you, if I knew with what;

Tell me, which knave is lawful game, which not?

Must great offenders, once escap'd the crown,

Like royal harts, be never more run down?

Admit your law to spare the knight requires,

As beasts of nature may we hunt the squires?

Suppose I censure—you know what I mean —

To save a Bishop, may I name a Dean?

Fr. A Dean, Sir? no; his fortune is not made;

You hurt a man that's rising in the trade.

Po. If not the tradesman who set up to-day,

Much less the 'prentice who to-morrow may.

Down, down, proud Satire! tho' a realm be spoil'd,

Arraign no mightier thief than wretched *Wild*,

Or, if a court or country's made a job,

Go drench a pickpocket, and join the mob.

Bat, Sir, I beg you (for the love of vice!)

The matter's weighty, pray consider twice;

Have you less pity for the needy cheat,

The poor and friendless villain, than the great?

Alas! the small discredit of a bribe

Scarce hurts the Lawyer, but undoes the Scribe.

Then better sure it Charity becomes

To tax Directors, who (thank God) have plums;

Still better, Ministers; or, if the thing

May pinch ev'n there—Why, lay it on a King,

Fr. Stop! stop!—*Po*. Must Satire, then, nor rise nor fall?

Speak out, and bid me blame no rogues at all.

Fr. Yes, strike that *Wild*, I'll justify the blow.

Po. Strike? why the man was hang'd ten years ago:

* * * * *

Fr. The Priest whose flattery be-dropt the crown,

How hurt he you? he only stain'd the gown.

And how did, pray, the florid youth offend,

Whose speech you took, and gave it to a friend?

Po. Faith, it imports not much from whom it came;

Whoever borrow'd, could not be to blame, Since the *whole House* did afterwards the same.

Let courtly wits to wits afford supply,

As hog to hog in huts of Westphaly;

If one, thro' Nature's bounty, or his Lord's,

Has what the frugal, dirty soil affords,

From him the next receives it, thick or thin,

As pure a mess almost as it came in;

The blessed benefit, not there confin'd,

Drops to the third, who nuzzles close behind;

From tail to mouth, they feed, and they carouse:

The last full fairly gives it to the *House*.

Fr. This *filthy* simile, this *beastly* line [mine;

Quite turns my stomach—*Po*. So does *Flattery*

And all your courtly civet-cats can vent,

Perfume to you, to me is excrement.

But hear me farther—Japhet, 'tis agreed, [read,

Writ not, and Chartres scarce could write or

In all the courts of Pindus guiltless quite; [write;

But pens can forge, my friend, that cannot

And must no egg in Japhet's face be thrown,

Because the deed he forg'd was not my own?

Must never Patriot then declaim at gin,

Unless, good man! he has been fairly in?

No zealous pastor blame a failing spouse,

Without a staring reason on his brows?

And each blasphemer quite escape the rod,

Because the insult's not on man, but God?

Ask you what provocation I have had?

The strong antipathy of good to bad.

When Truth or Virtue an affront endures,

Th' affront is mine, my friend, and should be

Mine, as a foe profess'd to false pretence, [yours,

Who think a coxcomb's honour like his sense;

Mine, as a friend to ev'ry worthy mind;

And mine as man, who feel for all mankind.

Fr. You're strangely proud.

Po. So proud, I am no slave:

So impudent, I own myself no knave;

So odd, my country's ruin makes me grave.

Yes, I am proud: I *must* be proud to see

Men not afraid of God, afraid of me:

Safe from the bar, the pulpit, and the throne,

Yet touch'd and sham'd by ridicule alone.

O sacred weapon! left for *Truth's* defence,

Sole dread of folly, vice, and insolence!

To all but Heav'n-directed hands deny'd, [guide;

The muse may give thee, but the gods must

Rev'rent I touch thee! but with honest zeal,

To rouse the watchmen of the public weal,

To Virtue's work provoke the tardy Hall,

And goad the prelate slumb'ring in his stall.

Ye tinsel insects! whom a court maintains,

That count your beauties only by your stains,

Spin all your cobwebs o'er the eye of day,
The Muse's wing shall brush you all away :
All his Grace preaches, all his Lordship sings,
All that makes *saints of queens*, and *gods of kings*. [Press,
All, all but Truth, drops dead-born from the
Like the last Gazette, or the last Address.

Yes, the last pen for Freedom let me draw,
When Truth stands trembling on the edge of
Law ;

Here, last of Britons ! let your names be read :
Are none, none living ? let me praise the dead,
And for that cause which made your fathers
Fall by the VOTES of their degen'rate line. [shine,

Such were the sentiments of that writer, who, more than all the rest put together, has done honour to English literature. Such was the language of the friend and companion of BOLINGBROKE and ATTERBURY ; of the man, whose writings were the admiration of his day, and the model for succeeding times ; of the man, whose acquaintance and friendship were sought by all the statesmen of his time ; of a man, whom a queen wished to visit, but whose scrupulous independence declined the intended honour.—Now, can any man shew me, in any periodical publication of the present day, language more completely divested of squeamishness than this ? Does any political writer of this day presume to go beyond what is here exhibited ; and what was practised by this accomplished gentleman ? To our clamourers we may say as he did to his : "Speak out, and bid us blame no rogues at all ;" for that is the point, at which, it is evident, the venal writers are aiming. POPE was freely permitted to "strike that Wild," the famous *pick-pocket* ; but the clamourers wished to prevent him from soaring higher. Here, too, we see an exact similarity : we, too, may take a free range in attacking the poor shoe-less caitiffs, who are brought before the police magistrates, whom, before they are tried, we call rogues, villains, and what else we please, naming them at the same time. Here, against these miserable wretches, we have "freedom of the press enough ;" but, if we so much as laugh at those, who "make saints of queens, and gods of kings," we are branded as conspiring traitors, as men having formed a settled scheme for overturning the monarchical branch of the constitution. In another poem, and that, too, the most admirable of all his admirable works, he has these verses.

A nymph of quality admires our Knight :
He marries, bows at court, and grows polite ;

Leaves the dull cits, and joins (to please the fair)
The well-bred cuckolds of St. James's air :
First for his son a gay commission buys,
Who drinks, whores, fights, and in a duel dies :
His daughter flaunts a Viscount's tawdry wife ;
She bears a coronet and p—x for life.

If any of us were to publish, from our pens, a story like this, it would be produced as a certain proof of our intention, of our settled design, of our deliberate scheme, for overturning the privileged orders, and with them the whole of the establishments of the kingdom. Yet, in the days of POPE, that man would have been laughed to scorn, who should have attempted to set up such a clamour ; though despotism was much less prevalent in that day, throughout the whole of Europe, than in the day in which we live. Here is "coarseness" for you ! Yet is this poem published now, daily ; and is to be sold, and is sold, at every bookseller's shop in England. Why not suppress these publications ? That they have their effect is evident, even from the use I am now making of them. And, a publication is still a publication, whether the book be of ancient or modern date. Why not put down all these publications, with which our printing-offices, and book-shops, and circulating-libraries teem ? Why not put them down, and not expose us to the mortification of seeing, and the danger of being led to imitate, the boldness of our celebrated countrymen ? Why not put down these works, which are read more in one day, than all the Anti-Jacobin writings that ever were published, or have ever been read, not excepting the *Weekly Anti-Jacobin*, with which the series began, the writers of which, by-the-by, affected to imitate POPE, but whose poetry as well as whose prose, after having assisted to ruin the bookseller, have, long since, been consigned over to the trunk-maker ; though not destitute of "personality," or of "filthy" allusion ? Why not put down the works of POPE, and SWIFT, and GAY, and GARTH, and AKENSIDE, and CHURCHILL, and scores of others ; nay, and of poor JOHNSON, too, though a dependent and a pensioner ; and of MILTON, and LOCKE, and PALEY. The list is endless. Why not put them all down ? Why not burn them all by the hands of the common hangman, and not expose us to the danger of imbibing, and acting upon, their principles, and, according to our abilities, imitating their writings ?—Of the constitution of England the liberty of the press constitutes an essential part. The powers, lodged in the

crown and its ministers, has been there lodged upon the presumption, upon the implied condition, that the exercise of it shall be open to public, free, and unrestrained, investigation, through the means of the press. It is in this sense, and this sense only, that the phrase, "*liberty of the press*" has any comprehensible political meaning. To utter *lies* is always a moral offence; to utter them to any one's injury is, and always has been, an offence punishable by law. If, therefore, the utterer cannot prove the *truth* of what he has uttered, and if it be proved that his lies have produced even a fair *probable* injury, he ought to suffer for the offence. But as to *opinions*; to make men liable to punishment for opinions, is, at once, to say, "slave! you shall not utter your thoughts." If the opinion be accompanied with *reasons*, these are the reasons to be examined; if good, the opinion will, and ought, to have weight with the reader; if bad, or if no reasons at all be given, the opinion is mere wind; it passes for nothing, and can have no effect.

—It is an observation that can have escaped no man, that despotic governments have never tolerated free discussions on political matters. The reason is plain; that their deeds will not bear the display of reason and the light of truth. But, what has been the invariable consequence? The sudden final destruction of those governments. The flame of discontent is smothered, not extinguished; the embers are still alive, the materials drying, the combustibles engendering; some single accidental spark, from within or without, at last communicates the destructive principle, and down comes the pile, crumbling upon the heads of its possessors. Let free discussion take its course, and, as you proceed, abuses and corruptions are done away, redress from time to time, is obtained; or, at the very least, the breast of the injured and indignant is unloaded. The Charleses and the Jameses had recourse, under the colour of law, to imprisoning, ear-cropping, and hanging; and what were the final consequences? James was the instigator to the beheading of Russel, and James, when, in the hour of distress he appealed to Russel's father for support, received for answer: "I had once a son, 'who, if he had been now alive, might 'have been able to give you assistance.'"

—Had the Charleses and the Jameses, instead of listening to the counsel of parasites calling themselves "*the loyal*," to the exclusion of others, permitted free discussion; had they allowed corruption to be checked in its course; had they, as it was manifestly their interest, suffered their people to obtain *timely* redress of their wrongs; their descendants would now have been upon the throne of this country, which they would have enjoyed, without any danger from plots and conspiracies. But, they arrayed *power* against *truth*, and in that conflict, they finally fell.—What is the reason, that all these reports about the Duke of York; all this "*talking him down*," have so long prevailed, and have gone rolling on, till, at last, they have collected into that form, in which they have been exhibited to the parliament? The reason simply is, that the press has been *timid*. If this had not been the case, some one or other of the reports would, long ago, have been embodied into a *plain statement*, when it would, if false, have met with as plain a denial, and there would have ended the calumny; if true, the effect would have been, a stop to the reported practices *in time*; before any great degree of discontent had been engendered, and leaving only a trifling fault to be atoned for. But, punish men for writing plainly, and they will have recourse to metaphor or fable; punish them for that, and they will talk; punish them for that, and they will whisper; and, at every stage of restriction, they will, by their additional bitterness, show that to the feeling of public is added the feeling of personal injury, and also of personal resentment.—I hope, and trust, that these observations, and others of a similar tendency from abler hands, will have their due weight, and that the conspiracy against the remaining freedom of the press, as well as against the persons now under government prosecution, will not be persevered in; but, upon one thing I am resolved, be the consequences to myself what they may, and that is, to continue to exercise the freedom of writing and of speaking, as my forefathers were wont to exercise it, as long as I have my senses, and the power of doing either one or the other. As witness my hand,

WILLIAM COBBETT.

Botley, 2d February, 1809.